

13 November 1956

MEMORANDUM FOR: CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

SUBJECT : Deployment of AQUATONE/OILSTONE to the Far East

1. Background: There have been several discussions between this Agency and the Air Force concerning the deployment of an AQUATONE Detachment to the Far East. At the last discussion, which was held in the office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the main issues which appear to be unresolved had to do with the timing of the deployment and the specific location in the Theater which should be selected as a base giving due effect to political as well as operational considerations. It was agreed on that occasion that a survey group, including representatives from AQUATONE Headquarters and the USAF Project Officer for this activity, should proceed at once to the Far East to examine available facilities and to consult with CINCFE and the Commander FEAF with regard to the selection of a base. Half of the members of this group have now returned and reported to me and I understand that you have received a report from the Commander FEAF. Now that the matter has been thoroughly explored it should be possible to resolve any outstanding issues and proceed with preparations for the deployment of the third AQUATONE Detachment.

2. Considerations Bearing on the Choice of a Base: It is my understanding that the findings of the survey group as to the suitability of various facilities in the Far East and the views expressed to them by CINCFE and the Commander FEAF were as follows:



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b. With the exception of certain political considerations, Japan is in every way the preferred location. Facilities can be made available more quickly and cheaply. Logistical support would be far easier than elsewhere. Having regard to such operational considerations as terminal weather, and location with respect to targets and to enemy radar, the Tokyo area is superior to any other with the possible exception of [REDACTED]. The coordination of AQUATONE with other activities in the Theater and the handling of film and tapes would be much more difficult at any more remote location.

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d. With regard to the political risks involved in operating from a base in Japan CINCFE definitely stated that he believed these would be manageable and the above-cited logistical and operational advantages of Japan would far outweigh any political disadvantages. The Commander FEAF was less optimistic with regard to the political risks but is understood to believe that, in the light of all the circumstances referred to above, [REDACTED] is the best location in the Theater.

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3. Considerations Bearing on the Timing of Deployment: The following considerations support the desirability of planning to deploy the third AQUATONE Detachment as soon as facilities are ready to receive it.

a. The Detachment in question has satisfactorily completed its training and is in a state of readiness for deployment with four aircraft. Although it is at present supporting continued development activities at [REDACTED] its presence there is not essential for these purposes. Accordingly, it represents today a fully developed capability which is not being utilized.

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b. The deployment of this Detachment from [REDACTED] will make available additional space for the SAC U-2 program, which is understood to be required by that program until March or April.

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c. Prospects appear to be favorable for permission to resume overflight activities in the Far East. Although their scope will necessarily be limited by weather during the winter, some useful missions can undoubtedly be flown by the AQUATONE Detachment as soon as it is in place and operational. Moreover, familiarity with the area will enhance its readiness when weather improves in the spring. In any event it would appear desirable to have this

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capability so positioned that it could help to meet the needs that might be generated by unforeseen developments in the area.

d. It is understood that facilities cannot be made ready even in Japan in less than two months time. Accordingly, deployment cannot realistically be planned for earlier than mid-January.

4. Policy Considerations: Two policy considerations that have a bearing on the deployment of the third AQUATONE Detachment should be mentioned to round out this review of the problem:

a. It has been suggested that all the resources of AQUATONE should be concentrated in the European Theater in view of the vastly greater number of high priority intelligence targets that may be reached from bases in Europe and southwestern Asia as compared to the number that can be reached from the Far East. Although there can be no doubt that in the absence of policy limitations upon overflight activities, the European Theater would have an unquestioned priority, it is difficult under the circumstances actually prevailing to envisage a situation in which more aircraft could be effectively utilized in the European Theater than will be available there. Eight U-2 aircraft are presently deployed in Germany and Turkey. During the next several months it is planned to bring the number up to ten (provided there is reasonable prospect of permission to undertake extensive operations in the spring). It would be possible (with four aircraft stationed in the Far East) to increase the number in the European Theater to a total of eleven or twelve by next spring if there were any prospects of using such large numbers. In fact, however, it is highly unlikely that weather patterns over the Soviet Bloc will ever be such as to permit the simultaneous employment of more than four to six aircraft and opportunities for the employment of even these numbers must be expected to be exceedingly rare. Accordingly, the deployment of a third Detachment to Europe either now or in the spring cannot be justified.

b. It has been suggested that the presence of Black Night eliminates the need for an AQUATONE unit in the Far East. Although Black Night can accomplish certain of the objectives common to both projects, AQUATONE represents a capability that is superior in some ways and for some purposes to Black Night. Accordingly, it is believed that they can be and should be treated as complementary rather than competitive activities.

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5. Conclusions: In the light of the foregoing considerations the following conclusions appear to me to be indicated:

a. That the third AQUATONE/OILSTONE Detachment should be deployed as soon as possible to the Far East.

b. That it should be stationed at [REDACTED]

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c. That planning should proceed on the basis that the Detachment will be deployed about 15 January subject to a review of this date when more definitive information is available as to the date of readiness of facilities at [REDACTED]

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Pursuant to these conclusions this memorandum will serve as my request for Air Force support in the furnishing of facilities and in effectuating the deployment of the Detachment. It is understood that the financing of costs incurred in readying facilities at [REDACTED] may be discussed between our two organizations.

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SIGNED

ALLEN W. DULLES
Director

Richard M. Bisselljr/djm
1-Addressee
2-Addressee
3-Pro. Dir. Chrono
4-Col. Leo P. Geary USAF
5-Dep. Proj. Dir.
6-Proj. Chrono (Hold)

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